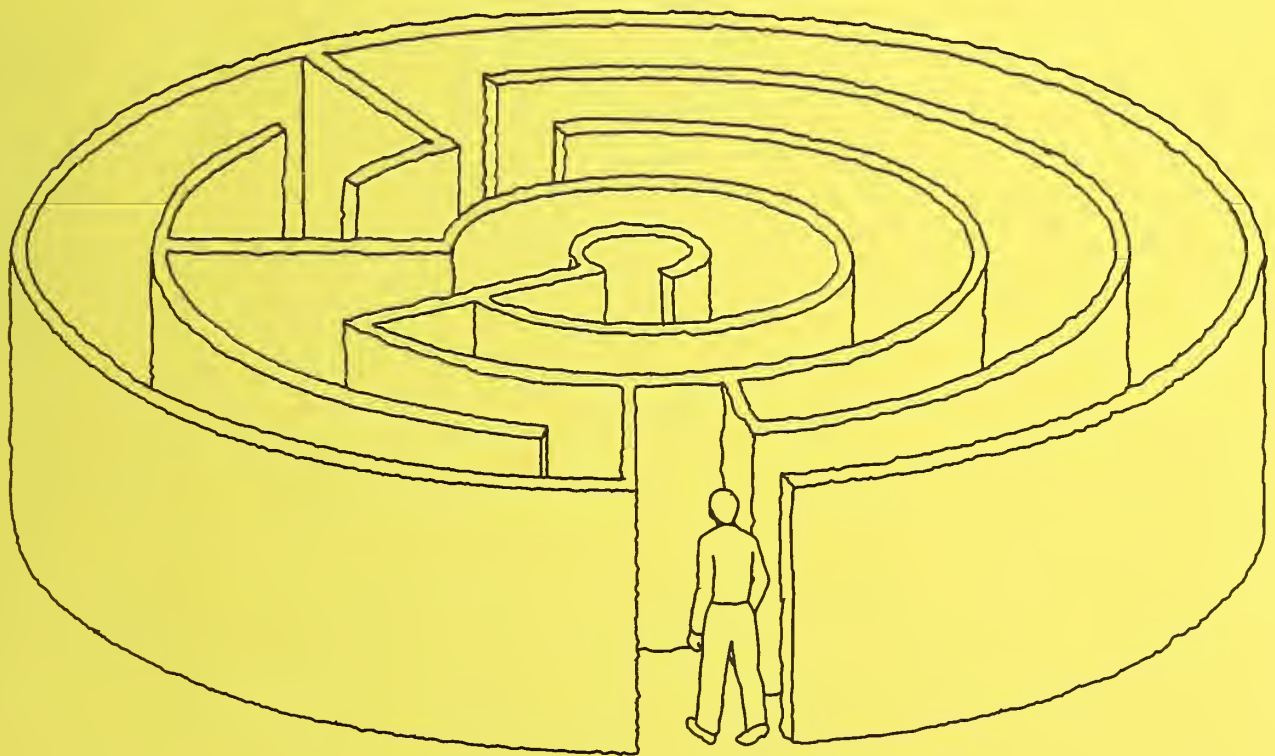




GP 3.2:C 56/8/990

# An Explanation of the Superintendent of Documents Classification System





**An Explanation  
of the  
Superintendent of Documents  
Classification System**



Depository Administration Branch  
Library Division  
Library Programs Service  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20401  
Revised 1990



# **The Superintendent of Documents Classification System**

## **Introduction**

The Superintendent of Documents classification system was developed in the Library of the Government Printing Office between 1895 and 1903. It was first described in October 1903 by William Leander Post, then in charge of the Library, in the preface to List of Publications of the Agriculture Department 1862-1902, Department List No. 1, issued by the Superintendent of Documents in 1904.

Mr. Post gives credit for the foundation of the system (classification by governmental author) to Miss Adelaide R. Hasse, who used government organization authorship to assign classification numbers to a List of Publications of the U.S. Department of Agriculture from 1841 to June 30, 1895. Miss Hasse prepared the list while assistant librarian in the Los Angeles Public Library. It was published by the Department of Agriculture in 1896 as its Library Bulletin No. 9.

This system has expanded as the Federal Government has grown. Though still retaining the principles upon which it is based, it has changed in some details and methods of use.

Because the classification system is based on the current organizational status of the government author, it changes as the organizational structure of the federal government changes. Thus, publications of some issuing agencies may be located in as many as three different places in the system.

Despite this functional weakness, it has stood the test of time as a workable arrangement for uniquely identifying publications issued by the United States Government. The Superintendent of Documents classification system has been used for over 90 years to identify public documents which were distributed to depository libraries and described in the Monthly Catalog of U. S. Government Publications. The system is also used to arrange the documents collections in most depository libraries, as well as in the documents collection of the National Archives.





## Foreword

This brief explanation of the classification system used by staff of the Library Programs Service was originally prepared to answer frequent inquiries, and to provide an overview in training new personnel.

The original 1963 edition was prepared by the late Mr. Joseph A. King. The slightly revised 1979 edition was prepared by Mr. Norman N. Barbee, Administrative Librarian, with the assistance of Mrs. Mae S. Collins, Chief of the Library Division. This current revision was reviewed and enlarged by the staff of the Library Programs Service, especially those within the Acquisitions and Classification Section, Depository Administration Branch.

It is hoped that this explanation will also provide a helpful guide for depository libraries which use the Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) classification system, as well as for other libraries and persons interested in, or concerned with, classification numbers assigned to publications by the Library Programs Service.

For more detail, users should consult the GPO Classification Manual: A Practical Guide to the Superintendent of Documents Classification System (GP 3.29:P 88). Questions concerning this publication or the SuDocs system in general should be mailed to the following address:

Chief, Acquisitions and Classification Section  
Library Programs Service (SLLA)  
U. S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20401





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# Principles of the System

The Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) classification system is designed to group together publications by the same government author. Within an agency or department, publications are grouped according to the subordinate organization. The purpose of this system is to uniquely identify, logically relate, and physically arrange each publication so that all publications of a single agency or department may be found together.

## Author Symbols

Each executive department and agency, the Judiciary, Congress, and other major independent establishments are assigned a unique alphabetical identifier, based on the name of the organization, e.g., "A" for Agriculture Department, "Ju" for Judiciary, and "NS" for National Science Foundation. However, the letters "X" and "Y" are reserved for Congress. The designation "Z" is not used.

## Subordinate Offices

To distinguish the subordinate bureaus and offices, numbers are added to the alphabetic identifiers with "1" designating the parent organization, and the secretary's or administrator's office. Beginning with "2", the numbers are applied in numerical order to the subordinate bureaus and offices. These numbers were assigned to bureaus and offices arranged alphabetically when the system was established, and newer subordinate bureaus or offices have been given the next highest number. A period follows the combination of letters and numbers representing the bureau or office. For example:

Agriculture Department (including Secretary's Office)	A 1.
Forest Service	A 13.
Information Office	A 21.
Rural Electrification Administration	A 68.

## Series Designations

The SuDocs classification system also identifies the various series of publications issued by a particular bureau or office. A number is assigned to each series and this number is followed by a colon.

Initially, the following numbers were assigned for the types of publications common to most Government Offices:

- 1: Annual reports
- 2: General publications (unnumbered publications of a miscellaneous nature)
- 3: Bulletins
- 4: Circulars

In establishing classes for new agencies or bureaus, these numbers were reserved for those types of publications. Later, new types common to most offices evolved and the following additional numbers were set aside in the classes of new agencies for particular types of series:

- 5: Laws (administered by the agency and published by it)
- 6: Regulations, rules, and instructions
- 7: Releases
- 8: Handbooks, manuals, guides
- 9: Bibliographies and lists of publications
- 10: Directories
- 11: Maps and charts
- 12: Posters
- 13: Forms
- 14: Addresses, lectures, etc.

Any additional series issued by an office are given the next highest number in order of issuance, i.e., as an office begins publication of a series the next highest number not already assigned to a series is assigned to the new series of that particular office.

### **Related Series**

New series which are closely related to already existing series are "attached" to the existing series so as to file side by side on the shelf. The relationship is provided by use of the slash mark (/) after the number assigned to the existing series, followed by a digit for each related series starting with "2". (The "1" is not generally used in this connection since the existing series is the first.) Separates are distinguished by use of a lower case letter beginning with "a" rather than by numbers.

A theoretical example of these "attached" classes is as follows:

- 4: Circulars
- 4/a: Separates from Circulars (numbered)
- 4/b: Separates from Circulars (unnumbered)
- 4/2: Administrative Circulars
- 4/3: Technical Circulars



## Class Stem

Combining the designations for authors and those for the series published by the authors results in the class stems for the various series of publications issued by the United States Government.

For example:

- A 1.10: Agriculture Yearbook
- A 13.50: Forest Service Reports
- A 57.38: Soil Survey Reports

## Book Numbers

A unique alpha-numeric identifier follows the colon. For numbered series, the original edition of a publication is classed with the series number of the book. For example, Department of Agriculture Home and Garden Bulletin number 86 would be classified A 1.77:86. For revisions of numbered publications, the slash and date are added, as: A 1.77:86/989, A 1.77:86/990, etc.

In the case of annuals, the last three digits of the year are used for the book number, e.g., Annual Report of Secretary of Agriculture, A 1.1:990. For reports or publications covering more than one year, a combination of the dates is used, e.g., Annual Register of the U.S. Naval Academy, 1990-1991 is D 208.107:990-91.

Unnumbered publications are assigned a number based on the principal subject word of the title, using C.A. Cutter's Two-Figure Author Table. An example is Radioactive Heating of Vehicles Entering the Earth's Atmosphere, NAS 1.2:R 11, "Radioactive" being the key subject word and the Cutter designation being R 11. Another publication, Measurements of Radiation from Flow Fields of Bodies Flying Speeds up to 13.4 Kilometers per Second issued by the same agency, falling in the same series class (NAS 1.2:), and having the same Cutter number for the principal subject word, is individualized by adding the slash and the superior number 2, as NAS 1.2:R 11/2. Subsequent different publications in the subject group which take the same Cutter designation would be identified as R 11/3, R 11/4, etc.

C.A. Cutter's Three-Figure Author Table is used for the purpose of providing for finer distinctions in class between publications whose principal subject words begin with the same syllable.

Revisions of numbered and unnumbered publications are identified by addition of the slash and the last three digits of the year of revision. For example, if the publication Radioactive Heating of Vehicles Entering the Earth's Atmosphere was revised in 1990, the complete classification would read NAS 1.2:R 11/990. Subsequent revisions in the same year would be identified as 990-2, 990-3, etc.

Periodicals and other continuations are identified by number, or volume and number as the case may be. Volume and number are separated by use of the slash. Some examples are:

Agriculture Outlook No.160

A 93.10/2:160

Social Security Bulletin, Vol.15, #2

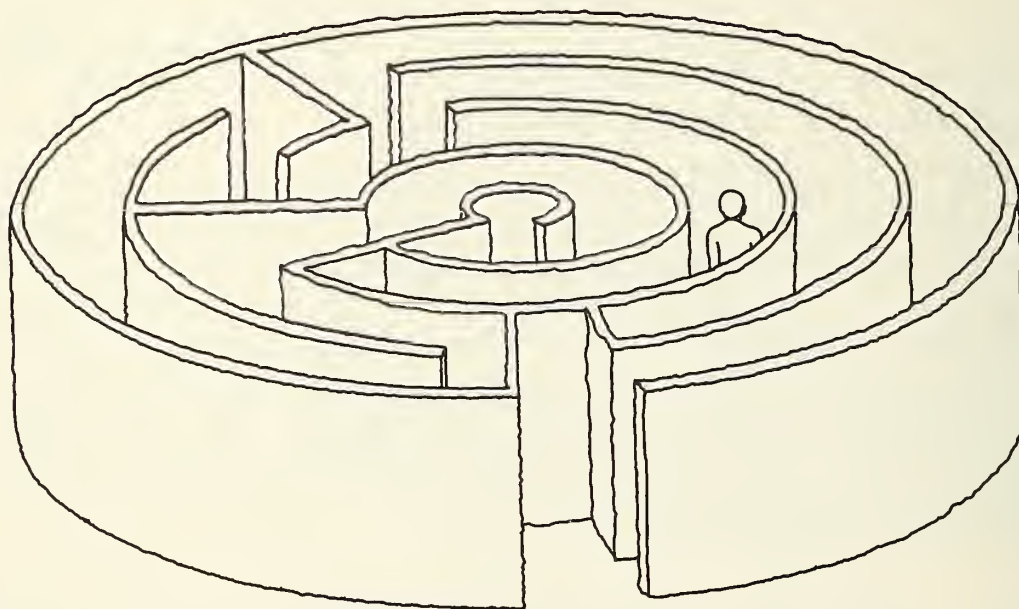
HE 3.3:15/2

Unnumbered periodicals and continuations are identified by the year of issuance and order of issuance throughout the year. The last three digits of the year are used, and a number corresponding to the order of issuance within the year is added, the two being separated by the slash. An example is:

United States Savings Bonds

Issued and Redeemed

T 63.209/8-3:990/1



# Special Treatment of Publications of Certain Authors

While the foregoing principles and rules govern the classification of the publications and documents of most Government authors, special treatments are employed for those of certain Government agencies. These consist of classes assigned to:

- (1) Boards, Commissions, and Committees established by Act of Congress or under authority of an Act of Congress, not specifically designated in the Executive Branch of the Government nor as completely independent agencies;
- (2) Congress and its working committees;
- (3) Publications of the President and the Executive Office of the President including committees and commissions established by Executive Order and reporting directly to the President.

## Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Those agencies established by Act of Congress or under authority of an Act of Congress, not specifically designated in the Executive Branch of the Government, nor as completely independent agencies, are grouped under Y 3, which is reserved for all such agencies. The individual agency designation follows the period, instead of the series designation. This agency designation is the author number from C.A. Cutter's Two-Figure Author Table for the first main word of the agency name, followed by the colon. Thus the agency designation for Consumer Product Safety Commission is Y 3.C 76/3: and that of Selective Service System is Y 3.Se 4:. The slash and numbers are used to distinguish between author designations of agencies having the same or similar first principal word in their names as Y 3.F 31/8: for Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Y 3.F 31/15: for Federal Council on Aging.

Series designations for publications of these agencies then follow the colon instead of preceding it. These series designations are assigned in the regular way.

The unique identifiers are then added to the series designations with no separation if the individual book numbers begin with letters, and are separated by the slash if they begin with numbers. Thus the Annual Report of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for the year 1990 is Y 3.C 76/3:1/990 while the unnumbered general publication For Kid's Sake is classed as Y 3.C 76/3:2 K 54.



## Congress and its Working Committees

The working committees of Congress such as Appropriations, Judiciary, etc., are grouped under Y 4. An author designation based on the name of the Committee follows the period and is followed by the colon. Thus the House Committee on Judiciary is Y 4.J 89/1; and the Senate Committee on Judiciary is Y 4.J 89/2., the slash and the numbers 1 and 2 being used to distinguish between two committees.

Where series do occur within the publications of a Committee they have been treated in various ways. Some examples follow.

Congressional Directory. This has been given a series designation of "1" following the colon, as Y 4.P 93/1:1. Individual book numbers are then marked off by use of the slash following the series designation, as Y 4.P 93/1:1/ with the particular issue being designated by Congress, as Y 4.P 93/1:1/101.

Economic Indicators. This monthly periodical issued by the Joint Economic Committee has been assigned a place in the group of publications issued by this Committee by use of the Cutter designation following the colon (instead of the regular numerical series designation), based on the subject word "Economic" as Y 4.Ec 7:Ec 7. The book numbers for individual issues are then designated by year of issue and number corresponding to the month of issue as 990-1 for January 1990, 990-2 for February 1990, etc. These are added to the series designation of "Ec 7" following the colon and separated by the slash, as: June 1990 issue, Y 4.Ec 7:Ec 7/990-6.

Serially Numbered Hearings and Committee Prints. Hearings and Committee prints of some Congressional Committees are numbered as serials within each Congress. These are designated by Congress and number (separated by the slash) immediately following the colon as: House Judiciary Committee Serial 13, 101st Congress would be Y 4.J 89/1:101/13, the number of the Congress taking the place of the usual numerical series designation. These are filed behind the hearings and committee prints bearing letter and number Cutter designation, i.e., to the right on the shelf.

Congressional Bills, Documents, and Reports. These numbered series of publications issued by Congress are not given a place in the system by use of lettered symbols but are simply filed at the end of all other classifications by Congress, session, and individual number with numbers representing the series titles.

Series	Individual examples
Senate Documents	Y 1.1/3:
Senate Reports	Y 1.1/5:
House Documents	Y 1.1/7:
House Reports	Y 1.1/8:
Senate Bills	Y 1.4/1:
Senate Resolutions	Y 1.4/2:
Senate Joint Resolutions	Y 1.4/3:
Senate Concurrent Resolutions	Y 1.4/4:
House Bills	Y 1.4/6:
House Resolutions	Y 1.4/7:
House Joint Resolutions	Y 1.4/8:
House Concurrent Resolutions	Y 1.4/9:

**Publications of the President and the Executive Office of the President including committees and commissions established by Executive Order and reporting directly to the President**

The agency symbol assigned to the President of the United States is Pr followed by the number corresponding to the ordinal number of succession to the presidency as Pr 41, George Bush, 41st president of the United States. Breakdowns under the agency symbol follow normal methods of classification expansion. However, in recent years, presidents have appointed many special committees and commissions to study particular problems and to report their findings directly to the chief executives. These organizations usually cease to exist after making their report. As their publications are usually few in number, normal bureau treatment is not practical and special treatment is therefore indicated to prevent establishment of classes which will not be used, and to keep together the publications of all such organizations appointed by one president.

Therefore, beginning with those commissions appointed by President Eisenhower, one series class (Pr -8:) has been assigned to each based on the principal subject word of its name as Pr 34.8:H 81, President's Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs. Publications of the committee are distinguished by addition of the slash and Cutter numbers based on the principal subject word of the title as in normal classification.

Beginning with the administration of President Kennedy, the continuing offices assigned to the President, which make up the Executive Office of the President, have been given permanent classes under the symbol PrEx. Thus with a change in administration it will no longer be necessary to change the classes for such offices as Office of Management and Budget, National Security Council, Central Intelligence Agency, etc. Subordinate offices of the Executive Office of the President are given their own numbers, the Office of Management and Budget for example, being assigned PrEx 2. Series and book numbers are then assigned in the usual manner.

# Table I

## Department and Agency Symbols Currently in Use

A	Agriculture Department
AA	Action
AC	Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
AE	National Archives and Records Administration
C	Commerce Department
CC	Federal Communications Commission
CR	Civil Rights Commission
D	Defense Department
E	Energy Department
ED	Education Department
EP	Environmental Protection Agency
FA	Fine Arts Commission
FCA	Farm Credit Administration
FEM	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FM	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
FMC	Federal Maritime Commission
FT	Federal Trade Commission
FTZ	Foreign Trade Zones Board
GA	General Accounting Office
GP	Government Printing Office
GS	General Services Administration
HE	Health and Human Services Department
HH	Housing and Urban Development Department
I	Interior Department
IA	United States Information Agency
IC	Interstate Commerce Commission
ITC	International Trade Commission
J	Justice Department
Ju	Judiciary(Courts of the United States)
L	Labor Department
LC	Library of Congress
LR	National Labor Relations Board
MS	Merit Systems Protection Board
NAS	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NC	National Capital Planning Commission
NCU	National Credit Union Administration
NF	National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities
NMB	National Mediation Board
NS	National Science Foundation
OP	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
P	United States Postal Service
PE	Peace Corps

**Table I**  
(continued)

PM	Personnel Management Office
Pr	President of the United States
PrEx	Executive Office of the President
RR	Railroad Retirement Board
S	State Department
SBA	Small Business Administration
SE	Securities and Exchange Commission
SI	Smithsonian Institution
T	Treasury Department
TD	Transportation Department
VA	Veterans Administration
X and Y	Congress



## Table II

### Agency Symbols of Boards, Commissions, and Committees Established by Act of Congress or under Authority of an Act of Congress (not specifically designated in the Executive Branch of the Government nor as completely independent agencies.)

Y 3.Ad 6:	Administrative Conference of United States
Y 3.Ad 9/7:	Advisory Commission on Information
Y 3.Ad 9/8:	Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
Y 3.Ad 9/9:	United States Advisory Commission on International Educational and Cultural Affairs
Y 3.Ad 9/12:	United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy
Y 3.Af 8:	The African Development Foundation
Y 3.Am 3:	American Battle Monuments Commission
Y 3.Ap 4/2:	Appalachian Regional Commission
Y 3.B 27:	Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
Y 3.B 47/2:	Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution
Y 3.B 78:	Board for International Broadcasting
Y 3.B 78/2:	Advisory Board for Broadcasting to Cuba
Y 3.C 73/5:	Commodity Futures Trading Commission
Y 3.C 76/3:	Consumer Product Safety Commission
Y 3.C 86/2:	National Critical Materials Council
Y 3.C 88:	Commission for the Improvement of the Federal Crop Insurance Program
Y 3.D 14:	National Commission on Dairy Policy
Y 3.D 84/2:	National Drug Policy Board
Y 3.Ec 7/3:	National Economic Commission
Y 3.Ed 8/4:	National Advisory Council on Adult Education
Y 3.Ed 8/8:	Commission on Education of the Deaf
Y 3.Ed 8/9:	Intergovernmental Advisory Council on Education
Y 3.El 2/3:	Federal Election Commission
Y 3.Em 7/3:	National Commission for Employment Policy
Y 3.Eq 2:	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Y 3.Ex 3/3:	Executive, Legislative & Judicial Salaries Commission
Y 3.Ex 7/3:	Export-Import Bank of United States
Y 3.F 31/8:	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Y 3.F 31/15:	Federal Council on Aging
Y 3.F 31/20:	Federal Executive Board
Y 3.F 31/21-3:	Federal Labor Relations Authority
Y 3.F 31/25:	Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board
Y 3.H 19:	National Council on Disability
Y 3.H 62:	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Y 3.H 62/2:	United States Capitol Historical Society

## Table II

(continued)

Y 3.H 62/4:	White House Historical Association
Y 3.H 71:	Federal Holiday Commission
Y 3.H 74:	United States Holocaust Memorial Council
Y 3.In 2/10:	National Advisory Council on Indian Education
Y 3.In 8/25:	Inter-American Foundation
Y 3.In 8/31:	Interagency Task Force on Acid Precipitation
Y 3.L 61:	National Commission on Libraries and Information Services
Y 3.M 33/3:	Marine Mammal Commission
Y 3.M 46/2:	Council on Graduate Medical Education
Y 3.M 53/2:	Commission on Merchant Marine & Defense
Y 3.M 66:	Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission
Y 3.M 74/2:	Monitored Retrievable Storage Review Commission
Y 3.N 21/16:	National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems
Y 3.N 88:	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Y 3.Oc 1:	Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
Y 3.P 11/4:	Pacific Northwest River Basin Commission
Y 3.P 19/2:	Panama Canal Commission
Y 3.P 31:	United States Institute of Peace
Y 3.P 38/2:	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
3.P 84/4:	Postal Rate Commission
Y 3.R 31/2:	Resolution Trust Corporation
Y 3.Se 4:	Selective Service System
Y 3.Se 5:	United States Sentencing Commission
Y 3.Se 5/2:	Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Senate
Y 3.T 22/2:	Technology Assessment Office
Y 3.T 25:	Tennessee Valley Authority
Y 3.W 84/3:	The Task Force on Women, Minorities, and the Handicapped in Science and Technology

## Table III

### Agency Symbols of Current Congressional Committees

Y 4.Ag 4:	Special Committee on Aging (Senate)
Y 4.Ag 8/1:	Agriculture (House)
Y 4.Ag 8/2:	Agriculture and Forestry (Senate)
Y 4.Ap 6/1:	Appropriations (House)
Y 4.Ap 6/2:	Appropriations (Senate)
Y 4.Ar 5/2:	Armed Services (House)
Y 4.Ar 5/3:	Armed Services (Senate)
Y 4.B 22/1:	Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs (House)
Y 4.B 22/3:	Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (Senate)
Y 4.C 73/2:	Commerce (Senate)
Y 4.D 63/1:	District of Columbia (House)
Y 4.D 63/2:	District of Columbia (Senate)
Y 4.EC 7:	Joint Economic Committee
Y 4.ED 8/1:	Education and Labor (House)
Y 4.En 2:	Energy and Natural Resources (Senate)
Y 4.En 2/3:	Energy and Commerce (House)
Y 4.Et 3/4:	Select Committee on Ethics (Senate)
Y 4.F 49:	Finance (Senate)
Y 4.F 76/1:	Foreign Affairs (House)
Y 4.F 76/2:	Foreign Relations (Senate)
Y 4.G 74/6:	Government Operations (Senate)
Y 4.G 74/7:	Government Operations (House)
Y 4.H 81/3:	House Administration (House)
Y 4.H 89:	Select Committee on Hunger (House)
Y 4.In 2/11:	Select Committee on Indian Affairs (Senate)
Y 4.In 8/4:	Interstate and Foreign Commerce (House)
Y 4.In 8/14:	Interior and Insular Affairs (House)
Y 4.In 8/18:	Select Committee on Intelligence (House)
Y 4.In 8/19:	Select Committee on Intelligence (Senate)
Y 4.J 89/1:	Judiciary (House)
Y 4.J 89/2:	Judiciary (Senate)
Y 4.L 11/4:	Labor and Human Resources (Senate)
Y 4.L 61 /2:	Joint Committee on the Library
Y 4.M 53:	Merchant Marine and Fisheries (House)
Y 4.N 16:	Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control (House)
Y 4.P 84/10:	Post Office and Civil Service (House)
Y 4.P 93/1:	Joint Committee on Printing
Y 4.P 96/10:	Public Works (Senate) (Environment and Public Works)
Y 4.P 96/11:	Public Works (House) (Public Works and Transportation)



### **Table III**

(continued)

Y 4.R 86/1:	Rules (House)
Y 4.R 86/2:	Rules and Administration (Senate)
Y 4.Sci 2:	Science and Technology (House)
Y 4.Se 2:	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
Y 4.Sm 1:	Small Business (House)
Y 4.Sm 1/2:	Small Business (Senate)
Y 4.St 2/3:	Standards of Official Conduct (House)
Y 4.T 19/4:	Joint Committee on Taxation
Y 4.V 64/3:	Veterans' Affairs (House)
Y 4.V 64/4:	Veterans' Affairs (Senate)
Y 4.W 36:	Ways and Means (House)
Y 4.In 8/19:	Select Committee on Intelligence (Senate)

## Table IV

### Classification of Congressional Publications (other than bills, documents, and reports)

- X.** **Congressional Record (bound).** Congress and session form the series designation with individual book numbers made up of volume and part. For example: 100th Congress, 2d session, volume 134, part 2, classified X.100/2:134/pt.2.
- X/a.** **Congressional Record (daily).** These are numbered throughout each session with volume number and issue number. For example: 101st Congress, 2nd session, issue number 89 is classified X/a.101/2:136/89.
- XJH:** **Journal of the House of Representatives.** These are designated by Congress and session as XJH:100-1.
- XJS:** **Journal of the Senate.** Designated by Congress and session as XJS:101-1.
- Y 1.2:** **House of Representatives miscellaneous publications.** Individual book numbers are assigned using the Cutter table for unnumbered publications.
- Y 1.2/2:** **Calendars of the United States House of Representatives and history of legislation.** Book numbers are assigned by Congress, session, and individual number as Y 1.2/2:990/78.
- Y 1.3:** **Senate miscellaneous publications.** Individual book numbers are assigned using the Cutter table for unnumbered publications. The volumes of the Journal of executive proceedings are given the Cutter designation Ex 3 with the volume numbers added as Y 1.3:Ex 3/v.91,pt.2.
- Y 1.3/3:** **Calendar of business.** Book numbers are assigned by Congress and individual number as Y 1.3/3:990/85.
- Y 3.** **Boards, Commissions, and Committees.** (See p. 5 in main text.)
- Y 4.** **Congressional Committees.** (See pp. 6-7 in main text.)
- Y 7.1:** **Memorial Addresses on life and character of deceased members of Congress.** Individual book numbers are assigned by use of the 3-figure Cutter table based on the name of the deceased member.
- Y 10.** **Congressional Budget Office, Congress**







